

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

EB-07 OMB-01 NEA-10 EUR-12 LAB-04 SIL-01 COME-00

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FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9624

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MEXICO 7594

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MX

SUBJECT: POST-MORTEMS ON ECHEVERRIA'S SIX WEEKS ABROAD

1. SUMMARY: FOLLOWING ATTEMPTS TO PULL TTOGETHER SOME REACTIONS OF OUR OWN AND OTHERS TO RESULTS OF PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA'S 14-NATION TOUR. THERE IS GENERAL AGREEMENT THAT IT NETTED MEXICO LITTLE IN ECONOMIC BENEFITS, AND THAT IT PROBABLY ACHIEVED LITTLE MORE IN ESTABLISHING MEXICO'S THIRD WORLD CREDENTIALS OR FORGING MEANINGFUL

ALLIANCES IN THE BATTLE OVER CERDS/NIEO. WE DOUBT TOO THAT IT DID MUCH FOR ECHEVERRIA'S OWN UN SECGEN CANDIDACY (ALTHOUGH THE RECENTLY RENEWED VIGOR OF THAT CAMPAIGN SUG-

GESTS THE GOM MAY BELIEVE OTHERWISE). MORE INTERESTING AND POSSIBLY MORE SIGNIFICANT ARE SUGGESTIONS THAT EXPERIENCES IN HAVANA AND ELSEWHERE MAY HAVE CAUSED SOME "LEFTWARD SHIFT" IN ECHEVERRIA'S THINKING ABOUT MEXICO'S OWN PROBLEMS AND WHAT SHOULD BE DONE ABOUT THEM, BOTH BY HIMSELF AND BY HIS SUCCESSOR. END SUMMARY

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2. AMONG DIPLOMATIC CORPS, THERE IS A GENERAL INCLINATION

TO DISMISS ECHEVERRIA'S TRIP AS EXPENSIVE SHOWMANSHIP AMOUNTING TO VERY LITTLE IN FOREIGN RELATIONS TERMS. A FEW OF MY COLLEAGUES HAVE GIVEN IT MORE CAREFUL THOUGHT, HOWEVER, AND THEIR CONCLUSIONS ARE WORTH RECORDING:

--YUGOSLAV AMBASSADOR, WHO IS OF COURSE WELL PLUGGED IN AMONG NON-ALIGNED GROUP HERE, THINKS TRIP HAD NEGLIGIBLE VALUE EITHER IN ADVANCING MEXICAN THIRD WORLD LEADERSHIP OR IN PROMOTING ECHEVERRIA'S UN SEC GEN CANDIDACY. HE

REPORTS MOST NON-ALIGNEDS, INCLUDING SPECIFICALLY EGYPT AS WELL AS YUGOSLAVIA, WOULD PREFER TO SEE WALDHEIM CONTINUE SINCE HE HAS PERFORMED REASONABLY WELL AND ECHEVERRIA IS AN UNKNOWN QUANTITY. NON-ALIGNED WORRY IS WHAT THEY WOULD DO IF, FOR SOME REASON, WALDHEIM WERE FORCED TO STEP DOWN. IN DOMESTIC TERMS, YUGOSLAV SEES TRIP AS HAVING BEEN POLITICALLY NEUTRAL, PLEASING NEITHER RADICALS NOR CONSERVATIVES.

--ISRAELI AMBASSADOR, ON OTHER HAND, WHO HAD PREVIOUSLY GIVEN ME HIS RATHER BULLISH VIEW OF ECHEVERRIA AS SEC GEN CANDIDATE, REPEATED THIS VIEW TO DCM AFTER PRESIDENT'S RETURN. HE REPORTS THAT ISRAELI GOVERNMENT WAS GENERALLY PLEASED (AS WE MIGHT HAVE GUESSED) WITH PRESIDENT'S MIDDLE-EAST PERFORMANCE AND PARTICULARLY WITH HIS ATTEMPT TO STAGE

RABIN/SADAT SUMMIT, MAKING ISRAELIS LOOK GOOD IN THE PROCESS.

--BRAZILIAN AND PERUVIAN AMBASSADORS, WITH WHOM I SPOKE LAST NIGHT, WERE IN A PERFECT FRENZY OVER SIGNIFICANCE OF TRIP AND IN PARTICULAR ECHEVERRIA'S PERFORMANCE IN CUBA. THEY AGREED THAT STATEMENTS THERE WENT CONSIDERABLY FURTHER THAN MEXICAN INTERESTS REQUIRED IN PRAISING CASTRO AND CUBAN REVOLUTION. PERUVIAN, INTERESTINGLY ENOUGH, WAS ALMOST

AGHAST AT "UNNECESSARY" BLANKET ENDORSEMENTS OF CUBANS. BRAZILIAN SAW IN THEM A DRAMATIC LEFTWARD SHIFT BY ECHEVERRIA, WHO PERHAPS HAD FINALLY REALIZED BANKRUPTCY OF MEXICAN POLITICAL SYSTEM, AND HE WONDERED WHETHER THIS PRETENDED

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SELECTION OF A MORE RADICAL CANDIDATE (E.G. LABOR MINISTER MUNOZ LEDO) AS HIS SUCCESSOR.

3. BANKING/BUSINESS/PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY AS A GROUP PREDICTABLY VIEW TRIP AND ITS RESULTS AS A FARCE, AND THEY DISDAIN ATTRIBUTING ANY IMPORTANCE WHATEVER TO ITS RESULTS. AGAIN, HOWEVER, A FEW HAVE LOOKED MORE SERIOUSLY AT ITS IMPLICATIONS: TWO BANCO NACIONAL DE MEXICO OFFICIALS

REMARKED TO ME YESTERDAY THAT (APART FROM UPPER CLASS) MOST MEXICANS ARE PERSUADED BY ECHEVERRIA'S CLAIMS THAT TRIP WAS GOOD FOR MEXICO, OPENING POSSIBILITIES IF ONLY FOR WINDOW DRESSING FOR ALTERNATIVE RELATIONS TO ITS "DEPENDENT" ONES WITH U.S. BANKERS CONCEDED THAT MANY--PERHAPS MOST--OF ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL AGREEMENTS SIGNED ALONG THE WAY WON'T PAN OUT, BUT THEY ARGUE THAT A FEW WILL TURN OUT TO BE DISTINCTLY BENEFICIAL TO MEXICO.

4. COMMENT: IN REGARD TO LATTER, WE ARE MUCH LESS SANGUINE. IN IMMEDIATE ECONOMIC TERMS, TRIP HARDLY SEEMS TO HAVE PAID FOR ITSELF. DESPITE ECHEVERRIA'S HOMECOMING CLAIMS THAT IT MADE MEXICO "MORE INDEPENDENT," WE SERIOUSLY DOUBT THAT AGREEMENTS AND CONTACTS WILL ADD UP TO MUCH IN EXPANDED TRADE OPPORTUNITIES, SINCE ECONOMIES OF COUNTRIES VISITED AFFORD A VERY LIMITED SCOPE TO MEXICO'S BUSINESSMEN. NOR DO TECHNICAL EXCHANGE AGREEMENTS SEEM TO PROMISE MUCH BY WAY OF IMPLEMENTATION, SINCE MEXICO HAS LITTLE TO LEARN FROM COUNTRIES VISITED AND LITTLE IT CAN AFFORD TO OFFER BY WAY OF TECHNICAL AID (IN PETROLEUM FIELD, FOR EXAMPLE, MEXICO'S CURRENT PUSH FOR DEVELOPMENT REQUIRES THAT IT EMPLOY EVERY AVAILABLE TECHNICIAN HERE AT HOME).

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FEA-01 AF-06 /109 W

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MEXICO 7594

5. WHETHER TRIP DID MUCH TO ADVANCE ECHEVERRIA'S PERSONAL PRESTIGE IN THIRD WORLD OR ADVANCE HIS SECGEN CANDIDACY REMAINS TO BE SEEN. THOSE WHO WITNESSED HIS FUMBLING ATTEMPTS AT PEACEMAKING IN MIDDLE EAST--EVEN ISRAELIS--COULD HARDLY HAVE BEEN IMPRESSED VERY FAVORABLY WITH HIS DIPLOMATIC ACUMEN. NEVERTHELESS, GOM POLITICAL MACHINERY NOW SEEMS TO BE CRANKING MORE ACTIVELY THAN EVER IN SUPPORT OF HIS CANDIDACY, SUGGESTING RESULTS OF TRIP MUST NOT HAVE BEEN TOO DISCOURAGING.

6. IN LONGER-TERM, PRESIDENT'S TRAVELS MAY INDEED HAVE STRENGTHENED SENSE OF MEXICAN IDENTIFICATION WITH OTHER THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES AND LAID BASIS FOR CLOSER POLITICAL COOPERATION IN BATTLES OVER NIEO IN WORLD FORUMS. WHETHER CONTRIVED OR REAL, THERE WAS MUCH MUTUAL BACK-PATting ALL ALONG TRIP'S ROUTE OVER CERDS AND ITS IMPORTANCE IN ACHIEVING END TO COLONIALISM/IMPERIALISM. EVEN HERE, HOWEVER, MEXICANS TOURING WITH PRESIDENT COULD NOT HAVE FAILED TO NOTE HOW MUCH GREATER WERE MEXICO'S DIFFERENCES THAN ITS SIMILARITIES TO TRULY UNDERDEVELOPED ECONOMIES OF AFRICA OR POVERTY-STRICKEN ONES OF SOUTH ASIA.

7. ON DOMESTIC POLITICAL SIDE, WHILE WE ARE NOT YET PREPARED  
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TO GO AS FAR AS THE BRAZILIAN AND PERUVIAN AMBASSADORS IN IDENTIFYING A "SHIFT TO THE LEFT" IN ECHEVERRIA'S THINKING, WE NEVERTHELESS SEE SOME INTERESTING IMPLICATIONS OF THE TRIP. WE TOO WERE STRUCK BY THE APPARENTLY GENUINE OUTPOURING OF WARMTH AND CAMARADERIE BETWEEN ECHEVERRIA AND CASTRO, AND WE NOTE THAT, AMONG ALL THE COMMUNIQUEs SIGNED ALONG THE ROUTE, ONLY THE ONE FROM HAVANA (AS FAR AS WE HAVE DISCOVERED) USED THE TERM "FRATERNAL" TO DESCRIBE RELATIONS. WHILE ALSO BOASTING OF FREE SPEECH AND PRESS LIBERTIES IN MEXICO, ECHEVERRIA'S PRESS CONFERENCE REMARKS THERE AND HIS HOMECOMING SPEECH HERE ARE MORE NOTABLE FOR WHAT SEEMS ALMOST ANGUISHED CONCERN OVER MEXICO'S OWN INTRACTABLE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS AND THE URGENT NEED TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THEM.

8. ADMITTEDLY, THERE HAS BEEN NO SIGN SO FAR OF ANY DRAMATIC POLITICAL SHIFTS OR IMPENDING TURBULENCE. ECHEVERRIA'S EXTENDED ABSENCE WAS LARGELY POSSIBLE BECAUSE HE AND EVERYONE ELSE HAD APPARENTLY AGREED THAT THE MAJOR POLITICAL QUESTION--THE PRESIDENTIAL SUCCESSION--WAS FIRMLY UNDER CONTROL. NOW THAT ECHEVERRIA HAS RETURNED, HOWEVER, AND WE HAVE ENTERED THE HOME STRETCH OF THE SUCCESSION SWEEPSTAKES, ANY IMPACT HIS TRAVELS MAY HAVE HAD ON HIS THINKING ABOUT HIS SUCCESSOR WILL BE CRITICALLY IMPORTANT.

9. AMONG THOSE WHO BELIEVE THAT THE TRIP REINFORCED ECHEVERRIA'S DESIRE TO SEE MEXICO CONTINUE DOWN THE LEFTIST-NATIONALIST ROUTE HE HAS CHARTED, THERE ARE TWO THEORIES AS TO HOW HE MIGHT ATTEMPT TO ASSURE THIS COURSE:

--THE FIRST AND SIMPLER ONE WOULD BE TO CHOOSE A SUCCESSOR CLEARLY IDENTIFIED WITH THIS COURSE, OR ONE ON WHOM HE MIGHT HOPE TO EXERT CONTINUED INFLUENCE--MUNOZ LEDO OR MINISTER OF PRESIDENCY CERVANTES DEL RIO MIGHT FIT THESE QUALIFICATIONS.

--THE SECOND ONE ASSUMES THAT, ONCE OUT OF OFFICE, ECHEVERRIA'S INFLUENCE UPON HIS SUCCESSOR WOULD BE LIMITED AT BEST, AND THAT IT WOULD BE MORE LOGICAL FOR HIM TO ADOPT A LAZARO CARDENAS-TYPE ROLE AS LEADER OF THE LEFT IN  
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OPPOSITION--NOT ALWAYS LOYAL--TO A MORE CONSERVATIVE SUCCESSOR LIKE MOYA PALENCIA. CERTAINLY THE LATTER ROLE WOULD BETTER SUIT MRS ECHEVERRIA, WHO CAN BE COUNTED ON TO WANT TO PLAY HER OWN AGGRESSIVELY LEFTIST-NATIONALIST ROLE BEYOND 1976.

10. IN SUM, IF TRIP'S ECONOMIC RETURNS SEEM MINIMAL, WE SEE REASON TO KEEP AN EYE ON ITS POLITICAL FALL-OUT IN WEEKS AHEAD.  
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